DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 365 JC 950 287

TITLE	An Integrated Approach to Multicultural Education.
INSTITUTION	Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, Sacramento.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	34p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Change Strategies; *Class Activities; Classroom Techniques; *Cognitive Style; Community Colleges; Cultural Enrichment; Cultural Pluralism; *Curriculum Development; Diversity (Institutional); Evaluation Methods; *Integrated Curriculum; *Multicultural Education; Role of Education; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	California Community Colleges

ABSTRACT

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to empower individuals so that they may function in a diverse, global society. To prepare students for the 21st century, however, community colleges must expand traditional definitions of diversity to include age, religion, culture, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, economic status, language differences, and most significantly, individual learning styles. Not all courses lend themselves readily to incorporating multicultural content, but all courses can be adapted to fit a multicultural climate with very little research by the instructor. Instructors should provide a comprehensive syllabus that chooses texts and learning materials that reflect diversity, recognizes alternatives in learning styles, identifies multiple evaluation measures, and identifies student support services. Examples of curricular experiences that incorporate a multicultural approach include: (1) a composition course anthology with works from culturally diverse authors; (2) assigning/inviting students to join diverse study groups; (3) a biology course restructured to include cooperative learning modules; (4) joining a visually impaired student with a sighted student as a learning team to keep a log of experiences; and (5) assigning students to prepare a report on the contributions of a non-Euro-American male to the development of a chemical principle or process. (A glossary of terms and a perceptual learning style inventory are appended.) (Contains 28 references.) (KP)

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An Integrated Approach to Multicultural Education

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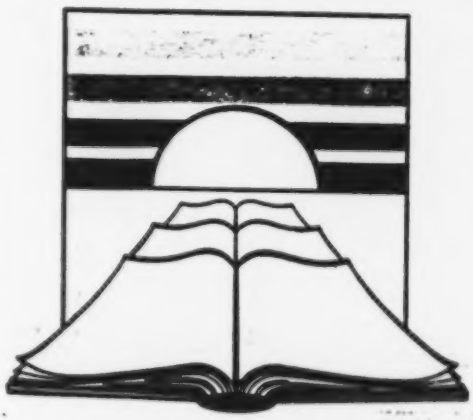

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Adopted Spring 1995

JC 950 287

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Abstract

An Integrated Approach to Multicultural Education

In this paper we provide concrete ideas on how you can implement change in your course or program to incorporate content and techniques that support multicultural education. It defines multicultural education in the community college environment with an emphasis on student learning styles. An instrument for analyzing and implementing curricular change is provided in addition to curricular application examples, a glossary and a student learning style assessment instrument.

The Academic Senate
for
California Community Colleges

An Integrated Approach to Multicultural Education

This paper was developed jointly by the Educational Policies Committee and the Affirmative Action/Cultural Diversity Committee, 1991-1995.

Winston Butler	Los Angeles City College	AA/CD
Loretta Canett-Bailes	Compton College	Ed. Policies
Edith Conn	Ventura College	AA/CD & Ed. Policies
Sally Flotho	Golden West College	AA/CD & Ed. Policies
Candice Francis	Palomar College	AA/CD
Joe D. Hernandez	Chaffey College	AA/CD
Annjennette McFarlin	Grossmont College	AA/CD
Ceci Medina	Cerritos College	AA/CD
Dwight Lomayesva	Riverside City College	AA/CD & Ed. Policies
Gloria Romero	Chaffey College	Ed. Policies
Virginia Romero	Cerritos College	AA/CD
Maxine Sherard	San Diego City College	AA/CD
Beverly Shue	Los Angeles Harbor College	Ed. Policies & AA/CD
Regina Stanback-Stroud	Rancho Santiago College	AA/CD
Michael Widener	Compton College	Ed. Policies

An Integrated Approach to Multicultural Education

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to empower individuals so that they may function in a global society. It is based upon democratic values and beliefs. It seeks to foster cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies and an interdependent world. The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges recommends these suggestions to engage faculty in meeting the educational needs of our diverse student population. This paper encourages faculty, both individually and collectively, to examine their teaching and to incorporate multicultural principles in their curriculum and classroom environment. It is not the intent of this paper to suggest that this integrated approach replace gender and ethnic studies courses and programs.

Community College faculty face the challenge of serving an increasingly diverse student body. This challenge is further magnified by the changing skills required for success in the workplace and societal needs. We recognize that higher education is a critical component in achieving success in a competitive global economy. We also understand that it is the primary way by which people can transcend their socioeconomic status.

The complexity of the challenge requires balancing the institution's mission, resources and capabilities. Developing a comprehensive multicultural action plan helps California community colleges to respond positively to the diversity of this state and its community colleges. By capitalizing on the presence of diversity, the faculty can create a responsive climate for diversity that is essential for the advancement of California community colleges and society at large.

The Academic Senate is guided in its response to diversity by four sources:

A. The Master Plan of Higher Education

B. The Board of Governors' adopted "Basic Agenda: Policy Directions and Priorities for the Nineties", 1992.

C. AB 1725 as is now incorporated into Title 5 of the Education Code.

D. The Student Equity mandate of the Board of Governors as adopted by the California Community College Chancellor's Office.

These documents reaffirm the mission of California community colleges and outline a plan to provide Californians, particularly "those who have been underrepresented in higher education and the workplace with quality programs in transfer and career education and in the mastery of basic skills and English as a second language." (Board of Governors Basic Agenda, 1992).

As California Community Colleges implement their mission priorities and student equity plans, it is imperative that they examine their institutional demographic characteristics.

They must design and implement educational programs to meet the changing needs of their students and society. This position paper promotes our nation's democratic ideals: basic human rights, social justice, respect for alternate life choices, and equal opportunity for all (Bennett, 1990).

WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

If we are to equip our students for functioning in the 21st century world where geographic boundaries no longer define the limits of our interaction with others, then the definition and our understanding of diversity must be expanded. Legal definitions of diversity have been created largely to promote opportunities for those who have been historically underrepresented in the workforce. Concepts and practices such as Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action have been developed to address previous practices that have denied access to employment for certain groups of individuals. Historically these have included African-Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Chicano/Hispanic/Latinos, American Indians/Native Alaskans and women. These categories have their limitations, and one should not confuse these narrow definitions with the need for community colleges to address diversity in a much broader sense. In addition to the more traditional gender and ethnic definitions of diversity, we would also encourage our colleagues to consider age, religion, culture, sexual orientation, veteran status, physical or mental ability or disability, economic status, language differences and, perhaps most significantly, individual learning styles.

The challenge for the classroom teacher faced with introducing multiculturalism into his or her classroom is "How can I present my discipline so that ALL of my students can learn?", rather than "How can I teach diverse students the intricacies of my discipline?"

LEARNING STYLES

Learning styles may be defined as modes of organizing, analyzing, classifying, assimilating and synthesizing information about the environment that are unique to each individual. How does culture influence the way individuals learn and how they understand the world? How does it influence the way they think, perceive, remember, and solve problems? Three factors that have been identified and appear to have an effect on learning styles are:

A. The socialization process, particularly where a society's child rearing practices fall along a continuum from authoritative to laissez faire.

B. Sociocultural tightness. The more that established social structures exert pressure to conform, as in tight-context cultures, the more responsive to social reinforcement are its people. An example of such sociocultural tightness is observed in a group of students who consistently socialize, take classes and study together.

C. The extent of ecological adaptation. In contrast to our own society, survival in some societies depends upon the ability to make keen observations about the environment and having a rich language to communicate those observations.

Examples might include accurate reading of the snow conditions of the Arctic region or wave patterns of the sea or facial expressions of an oppressor (Freire, 1970).

There are a number of instruments used by counselors and instructors to assess student learning styles. One is included as Appendix B in this document. Several authors (Armstrong, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Gardner 1993 and Hoehn, 1989) have described learning styles and have prepared other instruments. Implementing a student learning styles approach reemphasizes the importance of the student in the context of the discipline. It also underscores the active role students must play in learning. Once students recognize their particular learning styles they are better able to address their learning strengths and weaknesses and assume a greater level of responsibility for the learning process.

RECONSTRUCTING THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum transformation resulting in the integration of multiculturalism must address not only what but how we teach. Transforming the curriculum in both content and climate is intended to address the needs of those not traditionally represented in the academy including women, persons of color and persons with disabilities. Diversifying the curriculum is best achieved by employing a variety of modes. It must be addressed at the individual college, discipline by discipline, course by course, instructor by instructor and student by student.

Transformation of the curriculum occurs along a continuum. Several authors (Banks, 1993; Green, 1989, Schoem, 1993, and Ognibene, 1989) have created models that describe levels of curriculum diversification. These authors describe, a curricular transformation continuum that begins at the level of superficial inclusion of diversity. Superficial inclusion tends to examine surface cultural contributions such as holidays or foods, restricts the discussions to a separate part of the course, or adds limited information about the contributions of non-western cultures or women. Curriculum which is truly "multiculturalized" goes beyond this superficial view. It may present content that is comparative or that is delivered so that a non-dominant or comparative cultural world view serves as the frame of reference. Table I is provided to describe how a curriculum can be tailored to meet the needs of our diverse students.

TABLE I **Developmental Stages of a Multicultural Curriculum**

Component	**Stage I** Traditional	**Stage II** Alternative	**Stage III** Integrated	**Stage IV** Futurist
Professional Development	Traditional classes	Seminars	cross-cultural team (great teacher model) teaching/learning	Cross-cultural immersion experience
Subject Matter	Dominant Western European perspective	Dominant Western European perspective with additive component	content presented from global perspective	global perspective, addresses multiple learning methods, prepares students for change
Instructional Methods	Lecture	Multiple methods	student centered learning experiences	content presented jointly, use of interactive technology, service learning, immersion
Evaluation Methods	Paper & Pencil	Multiple methods	self assessment based on course criteria	individualized to meet needs of the student and course criteria
How Learning Takes Place	Instructor as source of Knowledge	Student/teacher role reversal	Student/teacher shared responsibility for learning	students are equipped with powerful learning tools and skills and assume greater responsibility for the learning process

Not all courses lend themselves readily to incorporating multicultural content to the same degree. Research by the instructor can generally provide some content based material in almost all disciplines. When course demands limit the amount of time one may devote to "new" content, the question of developing a meaningfully integrated curriculum must be addressed. Given the demands of the discipline, the sequential nature of courses, or the articulated expectations that are necessary to complete successive courses, it may not be possible to fully integrate a multicultural view in every course in every discipline.

However, we believe that ALL courses can be adapted to fit a multicultural climate with very little research by the instructor. Establishing a classroom environment that facilitates learning, reflects respect for all students and demands that respect be displayed by other students is a first step. Providing an educational experience that is challenging and inclusive in a tolerant environment is a goal that all instructors may achieve. The instructor who intends to transform his or her classroom to meet the needs of our diverse students must examine instructional strategies that address varied learning styles. Instructors are also encouraged to provide a comprehensive syllabus that:

A. reflects choices of texts and learning materials that reflect diversity,

B. recognizes alternatives in learning styles,

C. identifies multiple evaluation measures, and

D. reaches out to students by identifying instructor- initiated support services such as organized study groups and review sessions and refers students to institutional support such as counseling or tutoring services.

CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES

THAT INCORPORATE A MULTICULTURAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION

- An anthology for composition courses is selected because it includes works from a variety of culturally diverse authors.

- Students are assigned/invited to join study groups that are composed of students from a variety of backgrounds. As an assignment, participants share home cooked foods that are new to other members.

- A traditional academic discipline (Biology) is restructured from a strictly lecture/lab format to include cooperative learning modules.

- A visually impaired student is paired with a seeing student. In lieu of a regular term paper assignment, the two students agree to keep a log of their experience as a "learning team" and prepare a joint term paper which includes a section addressing how their team effort resulted in improved learning for each student.

- At the first class meeting of the term, each student is given a learning styles inventory to help each assess his or her own learning style. A handout describing each learning style and a few successful methods of capitalizing on the strengths of that style is provided.

● Some examinations during the term are given to a pair or small group of students and the grade earned by the team is shared. All members of the team are required to contribute to the solution of the problems presented in the exam. Team commitment to successful completion of the exercise is a valuable learning experience validating the concept of teamwork and may be more comfortable for students from cultures that value and recognize group rather than individual achievement.

● Students in a cultural anthropology course are required to research and attend a religious ceremony or other cultural event from a culture other than their own. They are encouraged to use an ethnographic interpreter to identify the meaning of the experience, take "field notes" and describe the event as well as their response to the experience in a brief paper.

● As part of critical thinking/multicultural learning experience, students are required to do a brief research report on the contributions of a non-Euro-American male to the development of a chemical principle or process. Some common names keep recurring, of course, but extra credit is given to researching and reporting on those whose contributions are new to the instructor. This provides the instructor with additional teaching resources and references.

● A learning community has been formed addressing the theme of "Western Migration in the U.S." The learning team includes an Historian, an Anthropologist/American Indian specialist, an English instructor and a Natural Historian. The theme is addressed through literature, film, music and text. It explores the social, political, economic and ecological relationships among "Americans," both native and immigrant, as well as the floral and faunal, during the 19th century. The course culminates in a three week field trip that includes visits to significant historical and natural history sites in the West. Students are required to do group research projects addressing multiple aspects of the course and are required to submit a journal as a part of the course.

CONCLUSION

Infusing multiculturalism across the curriculum is a formidable task. There is no one best way or a single answer to the questions that may face faculty in their efforts to better serve our students. To begin implementing a curriculum that is truly multicultural, one must consider not only the content of the course, but the climate in which that content is presented. We believe that the underlying principles of a multicultural curriculum apply to ALL disciplines and that efforts to better serve our underrepresented students will contribute to the success of ALL of our students as they learn to function in the multicultural world of the 21st century. By valuing diversity in ourselves and in others, by demonstrating positive expectations for our students, by being willing to learn new things and to try new methods to facilitate learning, we can help our students meet the challenges of our changing world. We ask our colleagues to consider how each may contribute to this effort as individual teachers and as participants in the shared governance of their institutions for it is through change at the individual level that institutions are moved.

Appendix A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary is provided to inform readers about terms that are currently used in considering multicultural issues and attitudes. The list is not intended to be complete nor are the definitions absolute.

African-American/Afrikan-American: A person of African heritage born in the United States. The term became widely used by the media, academics and community advocates in the late 1980's, replacing the term black. The Afrikan spelling is an emerging trend promoting pride in African heritage and Afrocentrism.

American: A person born on the American continent. However the word has generally been associated with North America and in particular, the United States.

American Indian/Native American/Alaskan Native: One of several designations for an indigenous or native person of the United States. Persons claiming membership in this group have typically maintained cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Asian-American: A person of Asian heritage born or living in the United States. This includes persons from China, India, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asian countries. As

a reporting mechanism, this historically underrepresented group is frequently combined with Pacific Islanders.

Black: A term used to designate people with dark skin with African heritage. In the U.S. it became popular during the 1960's as a form of self assertion. It is still used in other parts of the world although it has generally been replaced in the U.S. by the term African-American.

Chicano: This term generally describes people of Mexican background, born or raised in the United States. As the Chicano Movement began in the 1960's it became popular as a form of self assertion and has gained a broader social and political connotation.

Color-Blind: Literally this refers to a person who is physiologically incapable of distinguishing color. In social terms it refers to a person who claims to regard all people, regardless of color, the same. While seemingly an acceptable practice, it has gained a negative connotation in that it ignores differences some people view as positive and wish to assert.

Cultural Diversity/Cultural Pluralism: This term generally encompasses racial, ethnic, regional, religious, and socioeconomic groups, gender, age, persons with disabilities and linguistic differences. The concept of diversity recognizes the individuality of each of these groups and acknowledges the unique contributions made

by each. Cultural pluralism suggests a holistic view of society that is more than the sum of its parts.

Culture: An integrated pattern of human behavior including beliefs, thought, action, speech, institutions, customs and arts that are transmitted to succeeding generations.

Disability: A condition which impairs an individual's ability to function in one or more ways when compared with the norm. A person may be identified as disabled if he/she has any condition which affects mobility, vision (blind), hearing (deaf), speech and language, learning, brain function due to injury or development or has an emotional or psychological disorder that adversely affects educational performance or has AIDS or is HIV infected. Awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities increased in the post Viet Nam era when returning veterans raised their concerns of being denied access to the full range society and its benefits. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects persons with disabilities against discrimination in employment and requires that reasonable accommodations be made for such persons to function in public places.

Ethnic Minorities: Native Americans or Alaskan Natives, Asian-Americans or Pacific Islanders, African-Americans, or Chicanos/Mexican-Americans/Hispanic/Latinos. It is generally accepted that a person belongs to the group which he/she identifies.

Ethnicity: Affiliation with a group of people classified according to race or common traits and customs. This term has been used in place of race to designate a person's ancestry although race and ethnicity are not synonymous.

Ethnocentrism: A perspective expressed consciously or unconsciously in which one group is viewed as superior to others. A group that is central to all other world groups and by which all other groups are measured. Eurocentrism and Afrocentrism are two views that place Europe and Africa in such central positions respectively.

Feminism: An ideology that developed in the late 1960's that challenges the dominance of the masculine model as the ideal in society and the marginalization of women. It advocates for equality and for the civil, political and human rights of women.

Gay: A colloquial term for homosexual, that is, one who is sexually attracted to a person of the same sex. This term has become popular as a form of self-identification.

Handicapped: A term used to describe a person with a physical or mental disability that increases the difficulty of normal levels of achievement. It has generally been replaced by the term disabled. Handicap describes a barrier or problem created by society or the environment that impairs a person to function.

Hispanic: Literally, this term means a person from Spain or of Spanish descent. It became widely used in the 1980's as a term to describe all Spanish-speaking people. This term has resulted in some controversy as it suggests a process of assimilation and ethnic solidarity rather than identification and recognition of the individual nation of origin. The terms Chicano, Cubano and Puerto Ricaño are examples of more specific terms preferred by some.

Historically Underrepresented Group: In an educational context, this refers to any group for which the percentage of persons from that group who enroll and complete their educational goals is now and has been, significantly lower than the percentage that members of that group represent in the adult population of the State. The Board of Governors has determined that on a statewide basis this includes: ethnic minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Indian: The appropriate term to use in describing a person whose origin is India. The term was misapplied by early European explorers. More appropriate terms are available to describe Native Americans. One practical definition in wide use is that an American Indian or Native American is one who's ancestors lived in this country prior to the arrival of European settlers.

Jew: Generally referring to a person whose religion is Judaism. As an ethnic group, Jews are considered descendants of an ancient Semitic people including the biblical figures of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Latino/a: This term generally refers to persons whose origins are from Latin America who speak Spanish. Latino is the masculine reference, Latina, the feminine. This term became widely used in the 1980's as a form of self designation and in opposition to the term Hispanic which critics contended assigned too much honor to Spain and its conquest of the indigenous peoples of the Western hemisphere.

Learning Styles: Modes of organizing, analyzing, classifying, assimilating and synthesizing information about the environment that are unique to each individual.

Lesbian: This term specifically refers to female homosexuals. The term was derived from a reference to the Greek Island of Lesbos and its famous female poet, Sappho who described her attraction to women. This term has come to be popular as a form of self-identification.

Melting Pot: A concept popularized in the 1900's by a popular play, *The Melting Pot*, by Israel Zangwill. The play and the term argues that the U.S. is a great crucible in which different groups melt together to form the "American blend." It assumes that the melting pot is a process of mutual adaptation and groups blend together on an equal

basis. A criticism of the metaphor is that it ignores historic inequalities, Eurocentrism, racism and discrimination against specific groups in society.

Mexican-American: Persons of Mexican descent born or naturalized in the United States. The use of this term increased following World War II as an assertion of incorporation into mainstream U.S. society.

Minority: In the literal demographic sense, the term describes a numeric minority group when compared with the white, majority group. Demographic trends in California indicate that within the next decade, there will be no single majority group in the state. In a social/political context, minority generally implies a subordinate group with distinct physical and cultural characteristics experiencing differential and unequal treatment. In contrast, the social/political use of majority suggests a dominant group with superior rights, privileges and standing within the community.

Multicultural Education: A view of education that envisions and encourages a curriculum reflective of the society and the world in which we live. It embraces and accepts the interdependence of the many cultural and ethnic groups within our society and the world. It recognizes that individuals do not divest themselves of their heritage, and values similarities and differences in all persons.

Native American: A term used to describe indigenous people of the U.S. that became popular in the 1980's in place of the term Indian. Persons claiming membership in this group have typically maintained cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Oriental: Older generations of Asian-Americans and many still living in Hawaii may still refer to themselves as Oriental. However, it has become outdated and has been rejected as a term because of its imposition by non-Asians.

Pacific Islanders A person whose ancestors were indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands. This includes persons from the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii, Samoa and other Pacific islands.

Persons with Disabilities: When referring to people with disabilities, it is appropriate to put the emphasis on the person rather than the disability, e.g. "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person." When in doubt about the appropriate terms to be used it is acceptable to ask the person which terms he or she prefers. Common terms in use include:

Blind, referring to persons who have severe loss of vision. **Visually impaired** is also used where vision is not completely lost.

Persons whose mobility is restricted and who may or may require the assistance of mechanical devices such as a wheel chair, cane or other device to assist with mobility.

Deaf usually refers to persons with a profound hearing loss. **Hearing impaired** may also be used to describe any degree of hearing loss from slight to profound and is preferable to "hard of hearing."

Developmental disability is any mental and/or physical disorder that began before the age of 22 and continues indefinitely. This may include persons with mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy or other long term conditions arising from before birth through adolescence.

Learning disability is a persistent condition of presumed neurological disfunction which may exist with other disabling conditions. This disfunction continues despite instruction in standard classroom situations. To be categorized as learning disabled, a student must exhibit:

a. average to above average intellectual ability

b. severe processing deficit(s)

c. severe aptitude/achievement discrepancy(ies)

d. measured achievement in an instructional or employment setting.

Mental illness may describe many forms of mental illness such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar syndrome and emotional disorders. Again, the emphasis should be place on the person rather than the condition; "a person with schizophrenia" etc.

Physically Challenged: In an effort to increase awareness of persons who are differently abled rather than disabled, this term has emerged to describe persons whose primary limitation is reduced mobility. The intent of this change in language is to acknowledge that a persons's ability to function in society should be seen as a challenge rather than an impairment. The reference is considered somewhat trendy, patronizing, inaccurate and is therefore, offensive to some.

Protected classes: This term is applied to groups of historically underrepresented people. Federal and state definitions differ as follows: Federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEOC) guidelines guarantee non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity without regard to race, sex, color, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, ancestry, national origin or other applicable categories that are legally defined by laws applicable to the district. Title V defines protected classes for affirmative action purposes as women, persons with disabilities and members of ethnically diverse groups including American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Blacks and Hispanics.

Race: The concept of race itself is debated among anthropologists, but has been used historically and somewhat imprecisely to refer to persons of the same family, tribe, people, nation or stock, unified by a community of interests and habits. Physical characteristics have also been used to distinguish races and to create an artificial hierarchy of intellectual capability.

Racism: The practice of differential treatment or discrimination against a person based on race or racial stereotypes. Mechanism of such discrimination may include overt or covert use of institutional and ideological mechanisms such as religion, law, politics, economics, morality, science, fashion and education. This term is frequently used in reference to white domination over persons of color although racism is a practice that may occur among any group where policy decisions or practices are based on things such as ethnicity, culture or skin color.

Sexism: The practice of differential treatment or discrimination against a person based on sex and/or stereotypes of that sex. Mechanism of such discrimination may include overt or covert use of institutional and ideological mechanisms such as religion, law, politics, economics, morality, science, fashion and education. This term is frequently used in reference to male domination over women.

Appendix B

Perceptual Learning Style Inventory

Check those strategies or techniques that you think help you learn the best.

1._____motion pictures

2._____lecture, information giving

3._____group discussion

4._____reading assignments

5._____participant in role playing activities

6._____ project construction

7._____odor discrimination

8. _____television programs

9._____audiotapes

10._____participant in panel discussion

11._____written reports

12._____nonverbal/body movements

13._____drawing, painting or sculpturing

14._____tasting

15._____slides

16._____records

17._____questions-and-answer sessions

18._____independent reading

19._____physical motion activities

20._____model building

21._____ scent materials (scratch and sniff)

22._____graphs, tables & charts

23._____recitations by others

24._____interviews

25._____writing

26._____participant in physical games

27._____touching objects

28._____photographs

Perceptual Learning Style Inventory

Interpretation: In the first column below, circle the numbers you checked. If a majority of numbers for a particular style are circled, you may have a learning style similar to the one listed in the second column. Identifying your learning style can help you find ways to expand your learning effectiveness.

Strategy Number	**Learning Style**
1, 8, 15, 22, 28	Visual
2, 9, 16, 23	Aural
3, 10, 17, 24	Interactive
4, 11, 18, 25	Print
5, 12, 19, 26	Kinesthetic (using body movements)
6, 13, 20, 27	Haptic (using the sense of touch)
7, 14, 21	Olfactory (using the sense of smell)

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